

REMARKS

Amendments to the Specification

Applicants have amended the Abstract to include a method of testing reliability in an integrated circuit, as required by the Office Action. The new text of the Abstract is fully supported by the Specification as filed, e.g., in paragraphs [0021] through [0023]. No new matter is added.

Summary of Claim Status

Claims 1-12 are pending in the present application after entry of the present amendment. Claims 1-12 are rejected for the reasons discussed below.

Applicants request the favorable reconsideration of the claims and withdrawal of the pending rejections and objections, in view of the present amendment and in light of the following remarks.

Invalid Reference

Applicants respectfully draw to the Examiner's attention the fact that Chao et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,503,765) is improperly cited as prior art under 35 USC 103(a). As indicated at MPEP 706.02(1)(3), 35 USC 102(e), (f), and (g) do not apply through 35 USC 103 when common ownership has been established.

Applicants respectfully remind the Examiner that the present application is a divisional application of U.S. Patent No. 6,727,710 B1 (formerly U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/109,744), which was filed on March 28, 2002. Therefore, the present application is entitled to the priority date of March 28, 2002. Chao et al. was filed on July 31, 2003 and issued on January 7, 2003. Therefore, the present application was effectively co-pending with Chao et al., and Applicants assume that the rejection of Claims 1-12 under 35 USC 103(a) is made through USC 102(e). Hence, Chao et al. is not valid prior art for the present application under 35 USC 103.

The accompanying documents evidence that both Chao et al. and the present application were assigned/subject to assignment

to Xilinx, Inc., at the time the present invention was made. These documents include assignment forms for the application that later issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,503,765 (Chao et al.) and for the parent application of the present application.

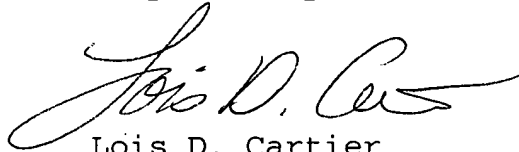
Rejections Under 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chao et al. As described above, Chao et al. is not valid prior art for the present application under 35 USC 103(a). Therefore, this rejection is overcome.

Conclusion

No new matter has been introduced by any of the above amendments. All claims should be now be in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If any action other than allowance is contemplated by the Examiner, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicants' agent, Lois D. Cartier, at 720-652-3733.

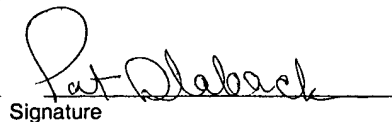
Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as **first class mail** in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on August 17, 2004.

Pat Slaback
Name


Signature